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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 001293

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/07/2013

TAGS: PREL EAID KPAL US IS KU

SUBJECT: KUWAITI CONCERNS ON MEETING ITS AID PLEDGE TO PA

REF: A. SECSTATE 85451

1B. KUWAIT 1283

Classified By: Ambassador Richard H. Jones, reasons 1.5 b and d.

11. (C) The Ambassador discussed the issue of Kuwaiti support for the Palestinian Authority (ref A) with Shaykh Dr. Ahmed Nasser al-Sabah, the Head of Office for Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Shaykh Dr. Mohammed al-Sabah, the morning of April 6. (Dr. Mohammed was unavailable due to a last-minute Council of Ministers meeting prior to his departure for his tour of P-5 capitals, ref B.) Drawing on ref A talking points, the Ambassador explained the situation to Shaykh Ahmed in detail and pointed out that Dr. Mohammed should be prepared to respond on this issue in his meetings in Washington.

12. (C) Dr. Ahmed thanked the Ambassador for reviewing the issue with him. He confided that the "real" reason that the GOK was hesitating to transfer money to the Palestinian Authority recently had nothing to do with Arafat or any other "personal" issues. The GOK understood the need to support the PA and reform efforts at this critical time regardless of such animosities. He argued that in fact, the GOK had transferred money to the Palestinians plenty of times in the past when their relations with Arafat were worse than they are now. No, according to Dr. Ahmed, the actual reason for their reluctance was a fear that the Israelis would find a way to seize or at least freeze any funds they provided for the PA.

13. (C) The Ambassador said that he understood the history that might lead to such fears but reiterated that the US had made good progress in this area recently. The Israelis were now releasing tax revenues to the PA on schedule. Dr. Ahmed said that if this was the case, and the US could guarantee that the Israelis would not seize/freeze the funds, Kuwait would seriously consider making good on its AL pledge. This is the answer Dr. Mohammed would give if/when the issue was raised with him in Washington.

14. (C) COMMENT: While somewhat encouraging, Dr. Ahmed's response falls well short of a commitment. Indeed, the Kuwaiti position may be intended to put the ball back into our court indefinitely, figuring that it will be impossible for us to provide the requested guarantee. Our skepticism arises from past discussions with Dr. Mohammed on this topic. Once before when urged that the GOK meet its Arab League pledges to the Palestinians, he responded wryly that he found it interesting that the US was trying to enforce AL resolutions.

JONES